

“We are developing the DLM assessment where supporting instruction is in the very design of the assessment, not an afterthought, so that all children can meet high standards.”

Neal Kingston  
DLM Project Director



## Iowa Department of Education

Guided by the core  
belief a valid and  
reliable assessment  
system guides  
instruction to  
challenging levels.

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## Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment (DLM)

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What Teachers Should Know

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2014-15 IM



## Dynamic Learning Maps

All children participate in state accountability assessments. The Dynamic Learning Maps™ Alternate Assessment System (DLM™) is an instructionally relevant system that supports student learning and measures what students with significant cognitive disabilities know and can do.

The dynamic learning maps are highly connected representations of how academic skills are acquired, as reflected in research literature. The maps go beyond traditional learning progressions to include multiple and alternate pathways by which students may develop content knowledge.

## Iowa Core Essential Elements

The Iowa Core Essential Elements (EEs) are specific statements of knowledge and skills that link the academic expectations for students with significant cognitive disabilities to grade-level standards.

The EEs specify academic targets, while the learning map clarifies how students can reach the specified standard. EEs included in the blueprint for each grade are listed in blueprint documents available on your state's page on the DLM website:

[www.dynamiclearningmaps.org](http://www.dynamiclearningmaps.org)

## DLM Assessment Design

The DLM system is designed to map a student's learning throughout the year. There are two testing phases. The **Instructionally Embedded** occurs in the fall, winter, and early spring. Students are assessed at least once on each EE that is chosen by a teacher before instruction. Results factor into overall accountability reports.

During the **Spring Testing** window students are re-assessed on a subset of the previously tested EEs. The system selects five testlets per content area. These also factor into overall accountability reports.

Each state has chosen its own spring testing window within the consortium-wide window that runs *mid-March through early June*. Consult your state's DLM webpage or contact your Assessment Coordinator for more information.

## Test Administration Time

*All times noted are estimates and ranges.*

Total testing time varies depending on the number of EEs assessed and a student's unique learning needs. Testlets may be taken separately across multiple testing sessions as long as they are all completed within the testing window.

### Instructionally Embedded Testlets: Time Per Testlet

- 5-10 minutes for mathematics
- 10-15 minutes for reading
- 10-20 minutes for writing

### Spring Testing: Total Testing Time

- 60-75 minutes in ELA
- 35-50 minutes in mathematics

### Field Testing: Time Per Testlet

Your state may require/recommend participation. See your state webpage or contact your Assessment Coordinator for more information.

- 10-15 minutes for reading
- 10-15 minutes for mathematics
- 10-20 minutes for writing

## DLM Assessments

Instructionally Embedded	Spring Testing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teachers choose EEs for instruction</li><li>• Scores used for instructional planning, monitoring and adjustment</li><li>• Scores contribute to results for accountability purposes</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Testing window varies by state</li><li>• Reassessed on several previously assessed EEs</li><li>• Summative scores influenced by embedded assessments</li></ul>

## Assessment Results

The DLM scoring system works differently from traditional alternate assessments. The system uses the student's performance on instructionally embedded assessments and spring testing and compares it to the learning map to determine the student's level of mastery on the Essential Elements. There are no raw scores, percentages, or scale scores.

Each student's results will include information about performance on the assessed EEs. Score reports will be provided at the individual student level and include:

- Essential Element Learning Profile
- Performance in each conceptual area
- Overall performance

More information about progress reports and summative reports will be provided in late spring 2015 on the DLM website.